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Photo Credit: Lillian Lane



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Photo Credit: Lillian Lane

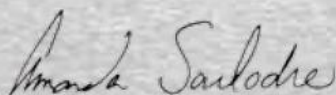
COVER: It all started because Maggie Venier wanted a place to process some of her fall harvest at the family cattle ranch. Enter retired farmer Art Lane, a neighbour with a handy streak. Photo by Lillian Lane.

HOME front

It's summertime in Saskatoon and the living's easy! This issue of HOME is filled with a great mix of stories to rejuvenate your love for all things home. Let's take a trip down memory lane. We present the first installment to showcase some historically treasures homes, long since torn down but deserving of reflection. We delve into a reno-relationship, new cool tech toys to help sell your home, and how to make spudnuts!

We are also thrilled to give you a glimpse into the lives of some notable citizens, including the man behind the development plans of many of our city's neighbourhoods. We salute you, Don Armstrong! And meet the artisan who has beautified our city with awe-inspiring wood carvings. Just another eclectic collection of Saskatoon summer stories we are happy to share with you!

Happy reading,



AMANDA SOULODRE
OWNER & PUBLISHER



HOME

SASKATOON

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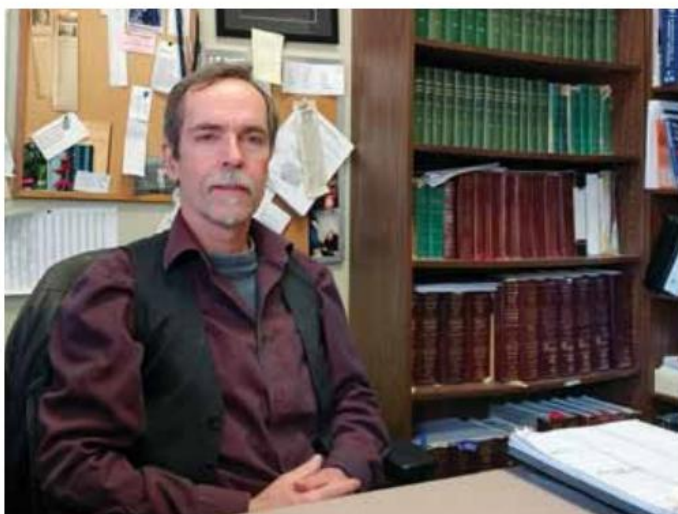
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Meet the HOME Team

SPOTLIGHT: OUR LOCAL HISTORIAN



Jeff O'Brien

In this issue we feature our favourite local historian, Jeff O'Brien.

Born in Saskatoon and raised in Regina, Jeff grew up in a home filled with books and music. As a child, he was rarely to be found without a book, a habit which carried over into his adult life. Hoping to become a writer, he enrolled at the University of Regina in order to get into the journalism program. Instead, he got a degree in history, followed by

a Master's in archival studies from the University of British Columbia, after which he came home, eventually becoming the Saskatoon City Archivist.

As an archivist, Jeff believes in taking history out of the archives and into the community, telling the story of Saskatoon to classrooms and community groups of all kinds. He is a regular guest on local TV and radio, and for several years co-hosted *Saskatoon Stories* after the

Friday evening news on CTV with then-news anchor Rob Macdonald.

Ironically, it is as an archivist and historian that Jeff was able to finally realize his first dream: to become a writer.

In 2006, he co-wrote the book *Saskatoon: A History in Photographs* (with Ruth Millar and Bill Delainey). He has contributed articles to the *Saskatoon History Review*, Saskatoon's acclaimed journal of local history, and for a time wrote "From the Archives" – a weekly humour column cleverly disguised as history – in the *Saskatoon Sun* and the *StarPhoenix*.

And, of course, he is

a regular and long-time contributor to *Saskatoon HOME*, where he writes lively and informative articles about the history of his adopted hometown.

Shortly after landing the job of City Archivist, Jeff met a nice Saskatoon girl named Kathy whom he quickly married before she could change her mind. They have three children, four grandchildren, a dog, an unusually large number of cats and a nice home in the suburbs, where Jeff spends his time reading, writing, working in the garden, and – his newest passion – playing the guitar. (🎸)

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We love to see and share your home renovation projects or design ideas. Tag us in your social posts and you may be featured in our next issue!



Thank you Ila K. for showing us your two feature wall projects using colour blocking!

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Introducing Saskatchewan's newest resort development, located on the shores of Blackstrap Lake, this master planned community is a mere 25 minutes from the city via twinned highway. Lakeside offers more than just the benefits of lake living. It features unparalleled proximity to Saskatoon with an optional turn-key revenue opportunity.

Well into development, 32 of 72 custom build residential lots have already sold. Another 58 lots will be released June 28th, majority of which back the golf course and are over a half-acre in size. They represent the beginnings of an architecturally-cohesive community providing havens for permanent & part-time residence, or savvy investors looking for a return on investment while building cherished family memories.

When cottages are not in use, Lakeside will manage, market & maintain the properties allowing owners to earn revenue without having to lift a finger.

The resort offers seven cottage styles and sizes to choose from. They range from the Buttercup, a two-bedroom, 960 sq. ft. model priced at \$298k + tax, to the spacious Prairie Lily, a 1,631 sq. ft. walkout with loft that sleeps up to 14 people, priced at \$479k + tax.*

The cottages have a bathroom for every bedroom to accommodate the conference market, and will rent for approximately \$200 to \$650 per night, depending on size and time of year. Owners entered into the rental pool will receive 60% of nightly rental revenue.

The cottages will attract such rates not only because they are well-appointed. A spectacular feature on the resort is an elegant event centre, for those seeking nature-based conventions, weddings and other events.

- Advertisement -



"Given its proximity to Saskatoon and Regina, we know the event centre will be a big draw for weddings, industry events and golf tournaments," said Brandon Moore, Lakeside's Strategic Operations Manager. The best part is, when owners are not using their cottages, they have the option to enter them into the rental pool, for as little or as much as they want, and simply collect cheques in the mail."

The event centre has been designed with soaring vaulted ceilings, expansive windows overlooking the lake, and amenities such as full-service restaurant and bar, spa, gym, pro-shop, four-season pool and event space options.

In the snowy season, the resort transitions into a winter wonderland with activities such as cross-country skiing, ice fishing, skating, snowmobiling and heated pool that can be opened to the elements.



The Prairie Lily Walkout
\$479,000 + tax*

The Bearberry
\$369,000 + tax*



The 9-hole golf course is the longest in SK from the blacks. With three additional tee deck options, the course is a perfect fit for both beginners and scratch golfers." says Dave Ferguson Lakeside's Owner and Developer. As an avid golfer and former Ontario Golf Club Champion, the course is Dave's signature contribution to the resort. He has landscaped the course with rolling valleys, trees, flowering plants, and irrigation to ensure a visually beautiful and exciting experience.

"All the lots are fully-serviced with city water, natural gas and power with prime locations overlooking the golf course and lake," Ferguson added. "As an added cherry on top, every owner will have access to the resort's amenities, from the clubhouse to swimming pool and other event centre facilities."

For purchasers who opt into the rental pool, a full furniture, appliance and cottage inventory package is available that includes everything from bedding to outdoor furniture and accessories such as cookware, art, games, electronics and even patio furniture with outdoor natural gas fireplace.

The lot draw begins Friday, June 28, 2019. Those interested can submit an expressions of interest with a \$2,500 fully-refundable deposit. Individuals in the lot draw will enjoy priority lot selection and a \$20,000 discount on their lot, an incentive reserved only for the opening weekend.



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The Buttercup
Floor Plan
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*Stated pricing includes fully-serviced half acre lot. Stated price is valid only for qualified lot draw entrants on cottages purchased over the opening weekend (June 28th-30th, 2019). Lakeside reserves the right to adjust plans, pricing and elevations. Artistic renderings may not accurately reflect constructed homes and ancillary buildings.



REWORKING A VIEW

A RENOVATION WITH PERSONAL PANACHE

Stopping just short of calling it a seven-year itch, author Anthony Bidulka and his husband take a hard look at their 25-year-old Casa Rio home every few years to see what needs a good scratch.

Over the years there have been refresh projects to update the look or better

suit their busy lifestyle. In 1999, Anthony left his job as a CPA to write full-time at home. They created his dream office so his mystery novels could take flight. Renowned for entertaining, they welcome hundreds of partygoers at annual soirees, host charity fundraisers, and

share intimate gatherings with family and friends.

Asking the Question

By 2018, it was time to take stock again. Their internal audit made them realize they still loved the house and 12 acres of privacy – with a few irreconcilable differences.

“We asked ourselves what would pull us from this place?” Tony recalls. “The answer was a view. When you live in a house for years, you tend to get blinders about day to day things,” Tony explains. “The feature wall of the living room had a fireplace in the



Casa Rio homeowner Anthony Bidulka's most recent renovation project was a creative collaboration.



KARIN MELBERG SCHWIER



LILLIAN LANE

centre with arched windows around it. The addition of a three-season room gave us a view of a distracting dirty metal roof. When we had dinner parties, I found myself closing the blinds."

That obstructed, problematic view "pushed us to consider a big change."

But after some looking, they discovered their coveted view was at home all along; they just needed to reveal it.

Courting a Contractor

"I loved a *HOME* magazine article about a renovated space for multigenerational living. The contractor ➤



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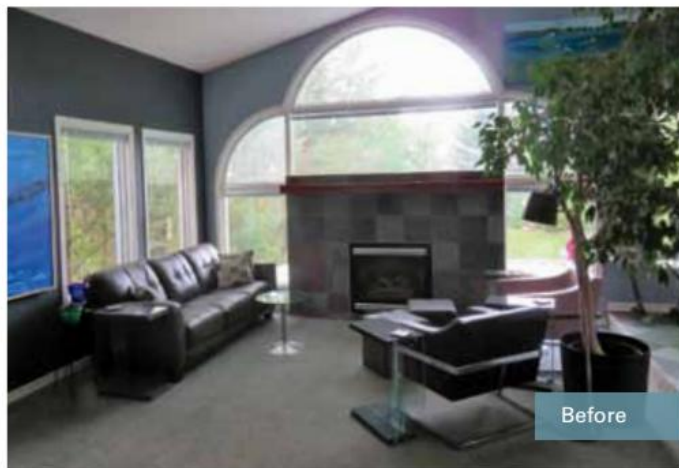


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was Bella Vista," Tony says. "Someone gave me some great advice about choosing a contractor. Don't always go with the cheapest price, and think about how you get along with the people because they're going to be part of your life for potentially months." They hit it off with Sheena and Jeremy Sinclair, owners of Bella Vista, immediately. "I'm not the kind of guy who just says make it pretty and I'll come back in three months. I want to be part of it. I have ideas and a vision, and they were totally into that."

Contractor "dating" is a two-way street, says Sheena. "We have always felt that we are privileged guests in someone's home during a build or reno. I loved Tony's openness to the creative process. We knew it was going to be fun."

The Whole Enchilada

Revealing the view led to a longer 'to do' list. "If we were going to fix the view, it would be dirty and messy," says Tony. "We decided to move downstairs and bite the bullet." Installing large

view-enhancing windows now included: tackle three-season room roof, move fireplace, redo master bedroom ensuite, the kitchen cabinets, backsplash and island, 'wow' the powder room, raise sunken living room and redo flooring.

Room with a View

"Of everything on the list, the window wall was the biggest issue," says Jeremy. "The original blueprints didn't show structural framing details. We brought in an engineer to be sure the structure would not be compromised." Three 72"x 84" windows now bathe the space in natural light and present a stunning, sunset-worthy southwest view.

The other trick was replacing the three-season room roof. It came down to weight and what the structure could bear. It had to also blend with the natural setting without detracting from the view. After an extensive search, the Bella Vista team found synthetic clay tiles. With some roof reinforcement, the result is perfect, Tony says. "Even if



After



Before

the tiles get dirty and covered with leaves, they still remind me of the Mediterranean."

Taking it to the Next Level

A sunken living room, cool in 1995, now dates a house. "With elderly parents in our lives, and even at our parties, it was a bit of a hazard," Tony explains. "I love to move furniture and the piano around. This sunken area really restricted options."

Raising a sunken floor can be complex, especially with – as in this case – a finished dry-walled ceiling below. There were electrical issues to deal with.

"We didn't want to cut into the finished basement ceiling, especially when that was their only undisturbed living space," says Sheena. "It was a challenge. We also replaced the flooring in a material that satisfied Tony's wish for a concrete look and

blended it with the foyer slate. Opening up this main floor has given them so much more flexibility."

Kitchen Redux

"The new kitchen is very sleek and unique but not trendy," says Sheena, "Working within the same footprint, a lot of technical planning was involved to marry the function with the colour blocking."

"I'm so happy they were able to save the granite countertops, something we had just put in before we decided to do the renovation," says Tony. "New countertops would have really screwed with my budget!"

"The granite island countertop was great, but the shape was a dated angled shape. We were able to reinvent it into the new design in a modern way," says Sheena. ➤

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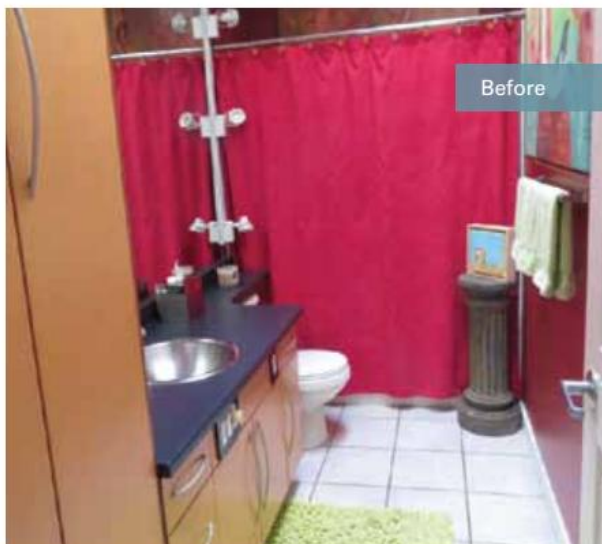
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After



After



Before



Powder Perfect

This narrow powder room is most often used by guests. Tony wanted it to be a jaw-dropper, but here he offered the least direction.

"I needed it to be a wow room," he says. "Sheena and I were flipping through flooring tiles. She stopped at this floral pattern. She raised her eyebrows, I raised mine and we got so excited!" Every other element sprang from that bold choice. "It's floral, but a little edgy with the pixelated edges. It's an experience." Guests often go missing at parties and later are found admiring the powder room.

The space reflects the natural acreage setting with a custom concrete basin, and a live edge spalted sugar maple floating countertop. It mirrors a primitive wood shelf sculpture by Claude A.

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After



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Morin. "The barbed wire nests are a bit of a throwback to my farmboy childhood. I fixed a lot of barbed wire fences!"

A Turks and Caicos Tribute

The master bedroom ensuite was in need of some updating and a little pizzazz. Tony opted for a deep soaker tub by the windows and the steam shower to the right. A double sink vanity was originally going to be finished "in wood with a little colour." Enter the blue marble.

"The blue marble countertop started it all." Tony laughs. Then Sheena found custom turquoise and blue tiles. "She said do I have your permission? Then we went a little colour crazy!" Sheena created an environment to reflect the tranquil Turks and Caicos sea and sky "where the

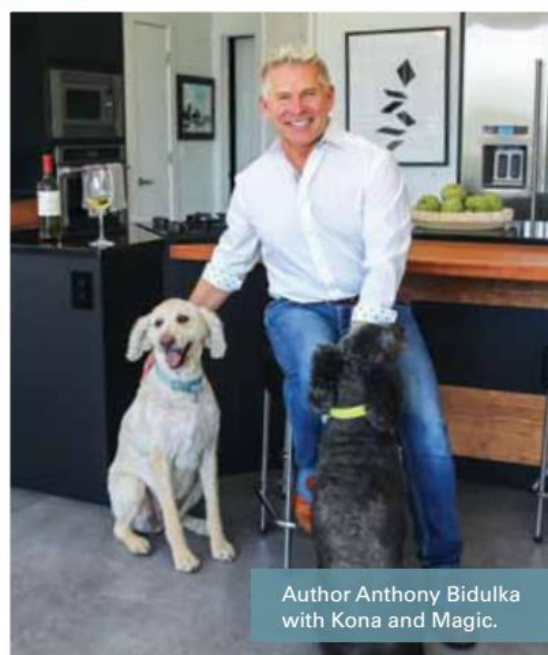
turquoise is extra turquoise and the blue is extra blue." It's an homage, he says, "to one of our favourite places in the world."

Stunning Results

"We try to be transparent with our clients," says Jeremy. "There's a lot going on, and your head can spin right off your shoulders with all the details. Tony enjoyed the process," he adds. "Some clients don't want to be that involved in the day to day. Tony was all smiles all day, every day."

The entire project was done and dusted in an astonishing 11 weeks. For the homeowners, scratching this particular itch has given them a renovation with no room for regret. (i)

Karin Melberg Schwier



Author Anthony Bidulka with Kona and Magic.

THE CASA RIO HOMEOWNERS

Anthony Bidulka and Herb McFaull are patrons of the arts and community builders. In 2014, they shared the CTV Saskatoon Citizen of the Year Award for their work with many organizations including Camp fYrefly Saskatchewan, Remai Modern, Persephone Theatre, the Saskatchewan Writers Guild, The Word on the Street, and the Royal University Hospital Foundation.

In 1999, Anthony, who has arts, education and commerce degrees from the University of Saskatchewan, left a 10-year CPA career to become a writer. An award-winning author of a dozen mystery, suspense and thriller novels, Tony's latest, *Set Free*, was published in 2016 and he is currently at work on his next book.



SHE SHED SANCTUARY

MODERN SUMMER KITCHEN A PRACTICAL OASIS

It always makes Maggie Venier happy to dig her hands into the earth of the huge garden lovingly tended for years by her late father-in-law Dick Hinthier. Fertile, manure-rich soil yields massive amounts of fruit and vegetables each fall on the

cattle farm northeast of the city. Maggie and her husband Ross lived in Saskatoon, but Maggie has kept the garden going since 2007. For years, the produce was loaded up, driven home to River Heights, and processed there. Early in 2014 Maggie had an idea.

If a guy could have a 'man cave,' why couldn't she have her own gender-specific 'she shed'? For those who find a man cave just self-indulgent and silly, her version would be more practical. Her she shed would need to bulk up for a lot of heavy lifting.

Canning Conundrum, She Shed Solution

"It was difficult to handle the amount of processing I do. Driving it back to the city was a pain," she explains. "Wouldn't it be great to do it all right there at the farm? I found some plans online



 **KARIN MELBERG SCHWIER**  **LILLIAN LANE**

for a little shed, almost like a summer kitchen."

Amidst the riot of colour that is her annual and perennial flowers, that "amount" of produce Maggie puts up is mind-boggling (see sidebar). Her canning equipment and supplies

could be kept on-site year around, and everything could be processed within steps of the garden.

The Art of the Deal

A little shed on the garden site could be more than just a workspace. As the ➤



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When Maggie Venier first asked retired farmer Art Lane (right) to help her build a 'she shed,' he had to figure out what that was.



Photo Credit: Karin Melberg Schwier

idea began to take shape, she knew she'd need the right carpenter for the job. Who better than Art Lane, a retired farmer who lives just down the road? After 40 years of farming, "I can't just sit around and do nothing," he chuckles. His fully

equipped workshop needed the exercise.

"So when Maggie asked if I'd help her build a she shed, well, first I had to ask what *that* was. Then I said sure, let's do it!"

"This wonderful, practical, beautiful place just wouldn't

have happened if it hadn't been for Art. He is a very special neighbour and over the last six years we have become very good friends," says Maggie. "He's been known to wander through the garden and pick himself a squash or give guided

tours to family and friends. As far as we're concerned, he can do whatever he wants! He still gives me advice on weeding. He's even come by to do it himself when he gets worried that wild millet might get a foothold."



The addition of the bar area and upper deck was serendipitous. Art had already started construction for someone else who had a change of plans. The sections fit Maggie's needs perfectly.



Maggie's practical summer kitchen has transformed into an idyllic prairie oasis.



There were several alterations to the original shed plan Maggie found online. This pergola and more seating areas add extra relaxation space.

Scavenged, Homemade and Kijiji-Sourced

Maggie's vision soon morphed into an entertainment space, and a tranquil spot for a little "me time." Art augmented the design with his own ideas. He opened up the space with a 12-foot vaulted ceiling, added a porch and pergola. There's no heating, but it works as a three-season space with kitchen, dining area, bathroom, and sitting area.

The concrete 24' x 20' slab was poured on the last 21-degree day in October 2014. In the spring, the shed and porch went up with the help of a small crew of family and friends in just three ➤



The view from the upper deck is a beautiful aerial panorama of the gardens and the fields beyond.

hours. That summer the building was completely finished inside and out with finds from friends and Kijiji; all the appliances, cupboards, décor, and fixtures. In 2016 and 2017 Art added the pergola, arbours, flower boxes, fire pit and greenhouse, all built in Art's shop, loaded on his trailer and assembled on site.

In 2018 an eastside deck with a covered area for the barbeque evolved into a lower deck bar area and upper deck suggested by Maggie and Ross' sons Carson and Taylor. The boys erected 12 6" x 6" posts and with Art's help built the decks, the bar and even added a dumb waiter. Since they didn't want to sacrifice any upper deck view, Art built frames with one-quarter inch grooves so Plexiglas panels could slide

in. It was completed just before a reveal party for 90 people in August, offering a calm and pastoral panorama of the cattle pastures and the horizon beyond.

"When she first asked me to build this, I looked up 'she shed' on the computer," Art says. "I thought most of them were too girly. But this one is the real McCoy!"

Weed Therapy

"People often say it must be so much work to have a garden of this size." Maggie shrugs. "I'm a pretty easy going person, but we had to postpone this big party when it poured rain the day before. I pulled on my boots and walked down to the garden and did about an hour of weeding. All my anxiety just lifted. I love to be outside, tending the plants, pulling





Much of the interior was sourced from Kijiji and garage sales, and handmade to serve Maggie's vision.



weeds, harvesting."

It helps to have a handyman on call. Art is at the ready and his shop is full of treasures. If Maggie needs it, he's likely to have it or can make it. His skills have taken him from Big River to Port au Prince, Haiti, where he went on mission work after the earthquake in 2009. He helped build accommodation for medical staff, and a school. Sticking closer to home now, he says, "This one keeps me busy!"

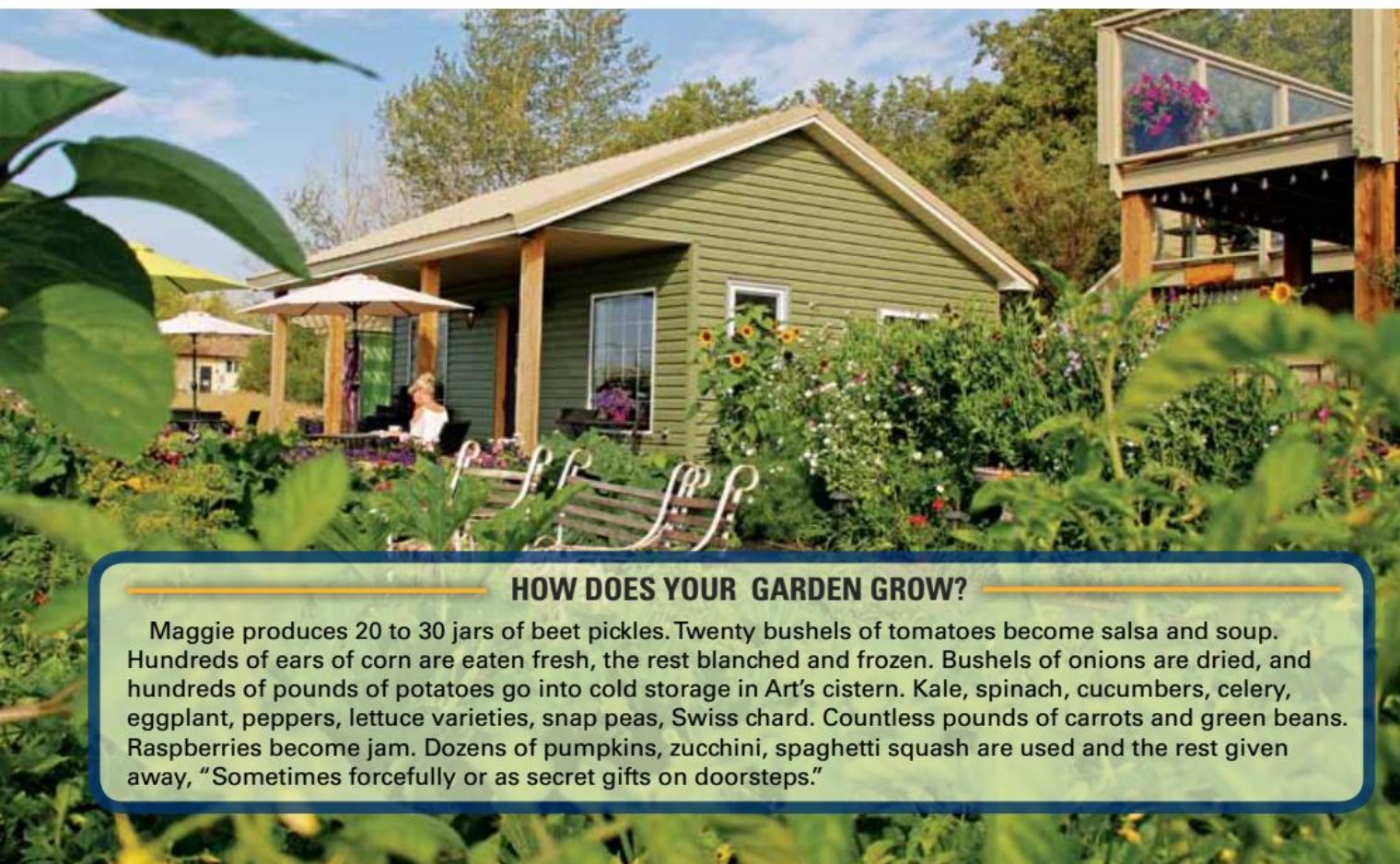
Family Tradition

"My husband's parents, Dick and Joy Hinder, bought the acreage in 1979. Dick had the garden on ➤

the original barn site until his passing in 1997," says Maggie. "He was a wonderful gardener and fed the whole family every summer. He'd ride his bike to the garden with a little trailer, load it up with produce and bring it back to the house. He was a kind man." Joy continued to live at the farm until 2017, and Ross and Maggie moved there in 2018.

"I started this for practical reasons, but it's become so much more," she says. "A gathering place for friends and family, a place just to sit and watch the birds, the pastures, the sky. Dick would be proud of what I turned his garden into, especially because his good neighbour Art made it happen." (H)

Karin Melberg Schwier



HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

Maggie produces 20 to 30 jars of beet pickles. Twenty bushels of tomatoes become salsa and soup. Hundreds of ears of corn are eaten fresh, the rest blanched and frozen. Bushels of onions are dried, and hundreds of pounds of potatoes go into cold storage in Art's cistern. Kale, spinach, cucumbers, celery, eggplant, peppers, lettuce varieties, snap peas, Swiss chard. Countless pounds of carrots and green beans. Raspberries become jam. Dozens of pumpkins, zucchini, spaghetti squash are used and the rest given away, "Sometimes forcefully or as secret gifts on doorsteps."

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When trees come down in Dennis McKee's Nutana neighbourhood, he's, well... stumped, when a few feet of the trunk aren't left standing. "I wonder, 'Why did you cut the whole tree down? You could have had an awesome statue or something.'"

Five years ago, when he and his wife, Kathleen Brannen, noticed the 70-foot spruce in their front yard listing towards their neighbour's house, they took swift action. "We had it taken down that week and I had my arborist leave about six feet

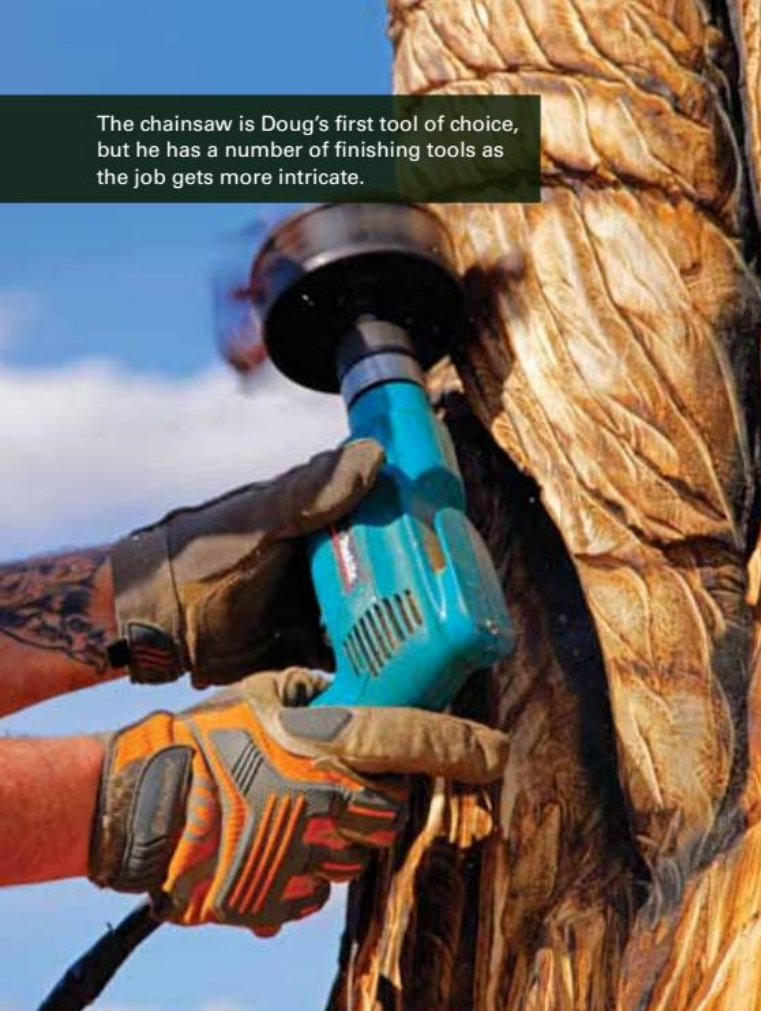
of it in the ground," he says.

Those six feet of the 95-year-old spruce were then transformed into a work of art by Doug Lingelbach, a Saskatoon-based artist and power carver. Doug worked his magic to turn the stump into Bacchus, the Greek

god of wine. He also used remaining logs to craft an outdoor table and two benches for Dennis and Kathleen.

"He did it over the Christmas break," says Dennis. "He was out there buzzing away with ➤

The chainsaw is Doug's first tool of choice, but he has a number of finishing tools as the job gets more intricate.



a chainsaw for about 10 days. I don't know what my neighbours thought of the whole thing, but none of them have moved away."

From Arborist to Artist

Doug has been carving trees for 28 years and estimates he's completed over 8,000 sculptures of various sizes. His work can be found in many Saskatoon

neighbourhoods, and he's frequently hired for larger commercial and municipal installations.

Working with nature comes naturally to Doug. After high school, he got a job pruning trees and eventually started his own landscaping company.

"There's an art to pruning trees," says Doug, as he explains how it evolved into



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carving. "It all started with a client who asked me to carve a Pooh Bear, for their children, into the tree. I didn't know if I could carve or not because I'd never sculpted."

He turned out to have a knack for it, and the client referred him to someone else for another carving.

Trees and Tools

Poplar and spruce are

Doug's most common mediums. He's also carved pine, birch, willow and elm trees, noting that elm can't be carved unless all the bark is stripped due to Dutch elm disease. "If it's a hardwood, it's a little bit more money because it's hard to carve, but you can get more detail," he says. "Whereas a softwood is a lot faster."

Doug's number one ➤



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Doug's first task with any job is to sit down with the client and find out what they have in mind. Many opt for wildlife, but often there are special requests.

tool is his chainsaw, he says. Die grinders, angle grinders and Dremels are also commonly employed. He uses knives and chisels for the finer details, as well as instruments for polishing, buffing, burning and sanding.

Process and Preservation

Sometimes Doug will arrive on site and discover the tree can't be carved, usually due to rot or infestation. "I'll give them the option to either buy a log from me or just abort mission and cut the tree down." If they decide to buy a log from him, Doug can mount it to create the illusion that the tree has always been there.

Most of Doug's clients hire him without knowing exactly what they want the finished piece to represent. "I just sit down with the family and ask them specifics, like favourite birds, favourite mammals. Do they have something precious they would like to see?"

Many of them decide to go with wildlife, but Doug has also rendered faces of client's loved ones, fantasy images, mythical creatures and gods, like Bacchus. Although faces are his forte, they're challenging "because you have to nail it."

Once the subject is established, Doug will either create a 3D sketch or make a model out of clay for the client to review and approve.

From there, he sets up a safe zone around the trunk, fencing the area off. He uses his chainsaw to do what he calls a "block out." It involves cutting away chunks of wood to create the basic shape of the piece. Then he marks out where different elements will go, such as the talons





of an eagle. Once the details are mapped out, he picks up his chainsaw again.

"I go as far as I can go with the chainsaw," says Doug. "If you try to massage the wood with a chisel or a grinder it takes forever, so I've learned to use the chainsaw 80 to 90 per cent of the time. Then you get into the fine detail. You start bringing out your die grinders, sanders, and start burning." For the most part, Doug avoids paint, except in small details like pupils. Once sanded and polished, he applies log cabin stains or oils, depending on his client's preference and budget. The owners typically have

to reseal the carving every two years if it's situated in direct sunlight.

Carving Competitions

Doug's talents have brought him to professional power carving competitions throughout Canada and around the world. This August, he'll defend his title as the Saskatchewan champion at a competition at Manitou Beach.

A career highlight came three years ago when he and a teammate won third place at the Chetwynd International Chainsaw Carving competition. "The judge from Japan came up to me and said, 'I have ➤

Many homeowners become attached to their trees. When they have to be removed, having their bases carved into works of art are a creative way to breathe new life into them.



"It's quite a neighbourhood attraction now," Dennis McKee says about his carving of Bacchus, the Greek god of wine. "One of my neighbours told me he sometimes finds himself standing out there talking to the old guy."

never in my life seen anything finished so beautifully."

Like Grandfather, Like Grandson

Doug's late grandfather, Gus Lingelbach, was one of his first supporters, always encouraging him to pursue his art from an early age.

"He was a famous violinist and painter," says Doug. "He always said, 'You're an artist—stick with it.' So, I kind of have a piece of him in me. He was a character."

Back in Nutana, Dennis is just one of many proud owners of Doug's work and is likely quite pleased that Doug's grandfather encouraged him to pursue

an artistic career.

"I've known Doug for 15 years and he's a character in his own right," says Dennis, unknowingly echoing the word Doug used for his grandfather.

Of his Greek god of wine standing sentinel on Lansdowne, he says, "If I ever I move, I'm taking it with me. I will saw him off and load him in the truck. To me, it's a very valuable investment that we made and we're just endlessly happy with it." (1)

Julie Barnes

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DANGER DYNAMITE

When Jim Spinney and Holly Ann Knott decided to tear down their Varsity View home and build a passive house, they encountered a touch of skepticism.

"Some people were suggesting that you can't really get a certified passive house in our climate because it's simply too cold," says Jim. "There were no certified houses at the time in any of the three prairie provinces,

so it was an opportunity to do something that was different. It was an opportunity to prove the science actually works."

And the couple's three winters in their—now certified—passive house have provided living proof of what's possible, despite what the naysayers said.

40+ Years in the Making

Originally, Jim and Holly Ann hired Robin Adair, a

local green builder, to tackle a renovation and repair some water damage in their existing home. When the damage turned out to be more extensive (not to mention more expensive) than expected, they decided to change tack.

"We decided, we're still young enough—why don't we demolish it ourselves and rebuild? Holly has always had an interest in energy

efficient homes," says Jim. As luck would have it, Robin had recently completed a course in passive house construction.

Passive homes have been on Holly Ann's radar since the late 1970s, when she toured the Saskatchewan Conservation House in Regina. Super insulated, air-tight and sans furnace, the Conservation House used less than a fifth of the energy ➤

of a conventional home. Over 30,000 people toured the innovative building, but the concept never took off in Saskatchewan.

"That predated certification," says Holly Ann. "They took the science to Europe and kept developing it and improving it and they came up with the whole idea of certification."

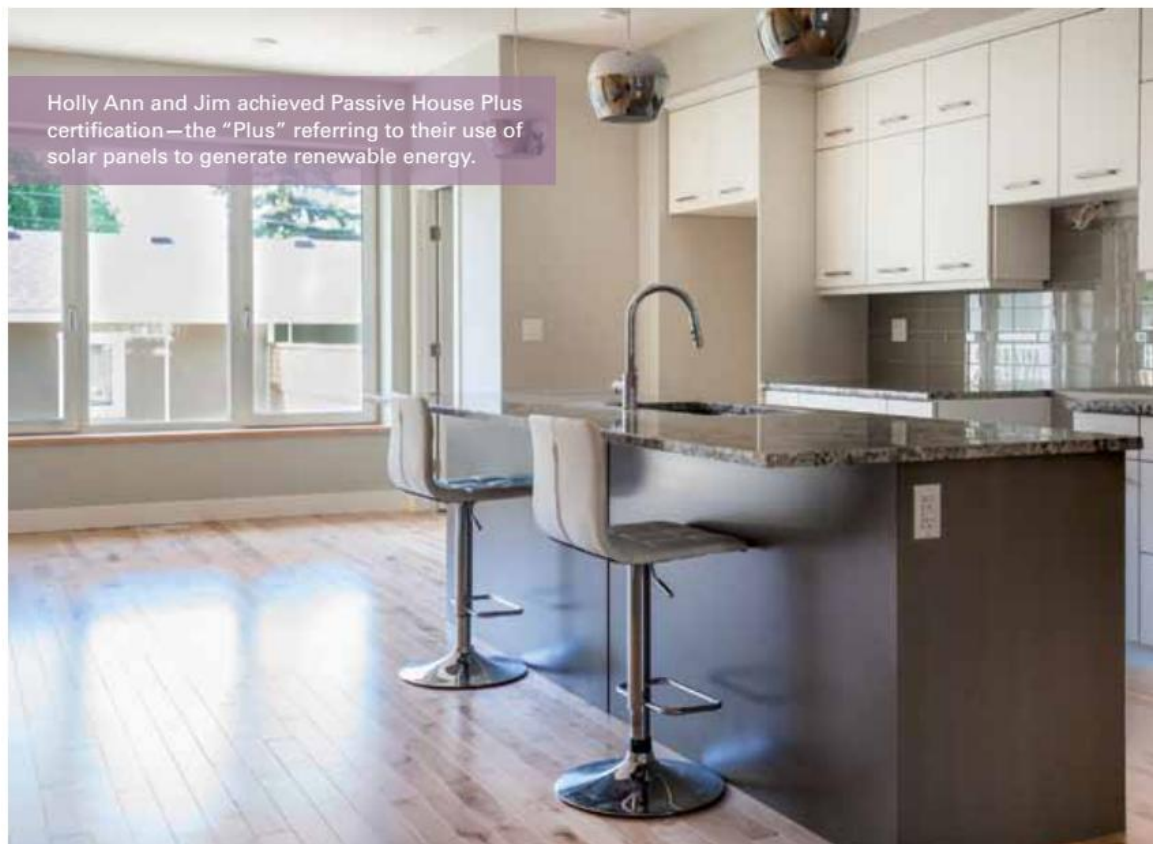
Last summer, over 40 years after Conservation House drew crowds, Holly Ann and Jim's house became the first in the prairie provinces to achieve passive house certification.

Passive House Principles

Air tightness is one of the five principles of passive house construction, and a blower test confirmed the building envelope is extremely well sealed. Robin advised the couple that if you added up all the areas where air escapes in a typical Saskatoon home, the total air leakage would be about the size of an opened up *StarPhoenix*. "Whereas our house is about half of a business card," says Holly Ann. "That's our air leakage."

Another principle is thermal-bridge-free construction. "No one really knows what that means," says Robin, "but if you equate that to a coffee mug that's insulated, that would be the same thing. You're not getting the transfer of heat from your coffee to your hands as you hold the cup."

High levels of insulation around the entire building envelope help moderate the temperature of the house, says Robin. "I think people understand why we insulate so much if you liken it to living in Saskatchewan, where in the wintertime, you're not





going to go outside with a light coat on. You're more than likely to go outside with a winter coat, boots, a hat, and mittens on. This is the same thing."

Optimized windows are another passive principle. Most of the building materials were locally sourced, but the high-performance, passive house certified windows and doors were ordered from a company in Austria as there was no Canadian supplier at the time. Multiple locking points around the edges of the doors and windows ensure a tight seal. Strategic window placement takes advantage of passive solar heating in the winter, and eyebrow roof detailing delivers shade from the summer sun.

The heat recovery ventilation (HRV) system checks off the fifth principle. In the winter, the cold air coming into the unit from

outside crosses with the warm air going out. The outgoing air preheats the incoming air, reducing the home's heating needs. In the summer, the reverse occurs. The HRV's filters ensure the air is consistently fresh, so it's ideal for people who have allergies, says Holly Ann.

"The HRV is sort of the heart and lungs of the house," says Holly Ann. "Where everybody else would have a furnace, we don't." In fact, there's no gas service to the house at all.

Staying Warm

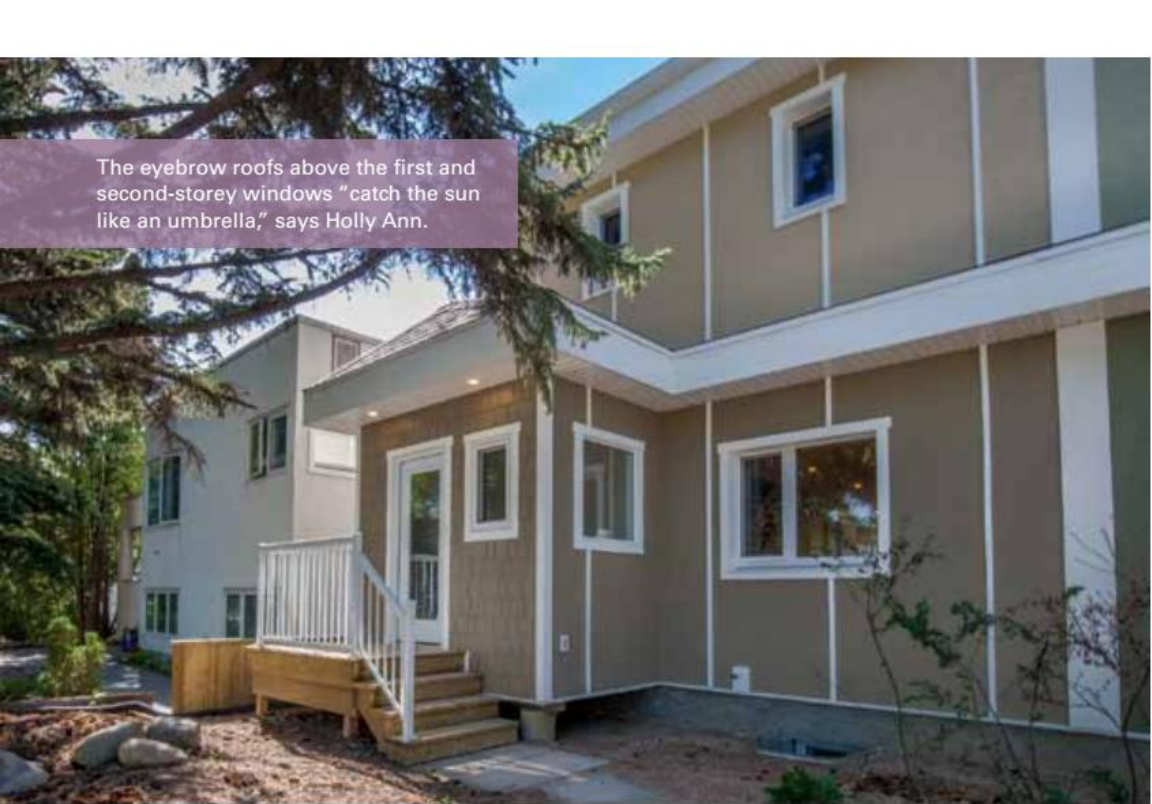
In addition to the HRV, passive solar design keeps the home cosy in the colder months, and electric heat provides an extra boost when required. "All the tile floors have heated flooring," says Holly Ann. "Not that we ever crank it up so that you're sort of feeling your feet are warm—it's just one of our alternate sources of heat." Another source of warmth is internal heat gain, says Robin. "This is all the heat gain that comes from the appliances and human activity."

Occasionally, the couple has to bring in reinforcements, says Holly Ann. "If the sun isn't shining in the winter and we're not getting that passive ➤



There is no gas service to Holly Ann and Jim's house. They receive an electrical bill, but offset their electrical costs with their solar panels.





The eyebrow roofs above the first and second-storey windows “catch the sun like an umbrella,” says Holly Ann.

He adds that if you don’t have to replace materials and other equipment, “that saves money and energy because you don’t have the embodied energy of having manufactured new equipment and then having it installed.”

The Steak, Not the Sizzle

Robin has found passive houses tend to cost five to 10 per cent more upfront to build than comparable, conventional homes built to code. But the payback is worth it for his clients.

“I wish we’d done it sooner,” says Holly Ann. “People buy granite countertops rather than more insulation. It’s about what they can see. It’s marketing—the sizzle not the steak.” (H)

Julie Barnes

absorption of the radiant solar energy, then it’s nice to just take our little space heater into whatever room that we happen to be in and warm it up a little bit more.”

Solar panels on the house and garage help offset some of their electricity use. “Our solar panels make sense in

Saskatchewan—we have lots of sun,” says Holly Ann “They provide our energy needs first and then they feed back into the city in the summer.”

Built to Last and Other Benefits

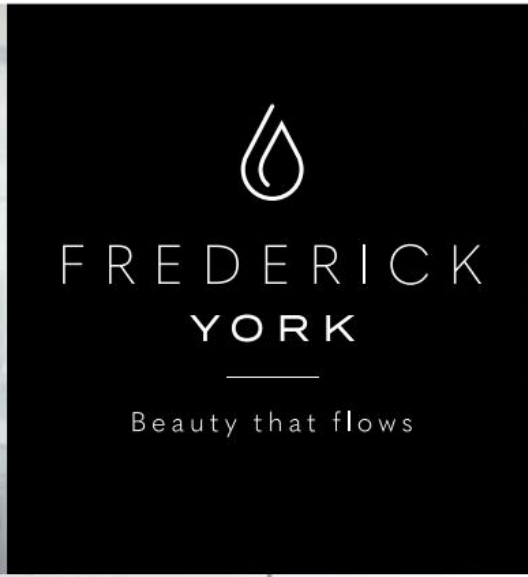
Reduced energy consumption and smaller utility bills are just two of

the benefits.

“First off, we’re not using fossil fuels,” says Robin. “The second thing is, the energy savings over the life cycle of the building—this building is designed to last a minimum of 50 to 80 years without a hiccup, including the windows and ventilation.”



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A TALE OF TWO CONDOS

CHOOSING URBAN DENSITY OVER WHITE PICKET FENCES

 **ASHLEIGH MATTERN**

When Carolyn Saganski saw the 24-foot high ceilings in 2nd Avenue Lofts penthouse, she fell in love.

"When I moved back to Saskatoon, I was so surprised that this unit was available," Carolyn says. "The fact that it was so unique and the fact that nobody else saw that, I was just flabbergasted."

Carolyn is an interior designer. When she moved into this 2,500-square-

foot apartment-style condominium and made it her own, she wanted to keep the wide open space. She chose not to paint the walls or hang much art.

"To me, paint is a means to make an emotion and make a space feel different. I loved the volume of the space and what it represented."

The towering concrete walls became a stage to display stunning furniture

and a few carefully chosen pieces of artwork.

A Lifestyle Choice

The 2nd Avenue Lofts is the fifth condo the 58-year-old has lived in. She bought her first when she was 30, and she says she plans on living in condos for the rest of her life.

A condominium refers to a type of property ownership with full ownership of the unit and shared ownership

of common spaces. All owners are part of a condo corporation, which then elects a board of directors to manage the common property. Condo fees cover the cost of maintenance.

In the 2nd Avenue Lofts, the shared spaces include a cardio room, weight room, meeting room, and a rooftop terrace, onto which Carolyn's loft opens.

"They've turned the deck

into a community garden, and every year the gardening club invites everyone to come out for a massive planting.”

Sometimes, people hold parties on the deck, but Carolyn says she mostly turns a blind eye to the shenanigans. “Everybody has to cut loose every now and then.”

Community Connections

Leisha Grebinski and her husband also chose to live in a condominium for the community connections it can provide.

Their townhouse-style condo complex in the Riversdale neighbourhood is in a U-shape with giant south-facing windows that look out onto a shared courtyard. There are common lounging chairs, a fire pit, a compost bin, a patch of grass, and each unit has its own garden box.

“There’s no shortage of outdoor space, but it’s not private,” Leisha said. Barbecuing in their main

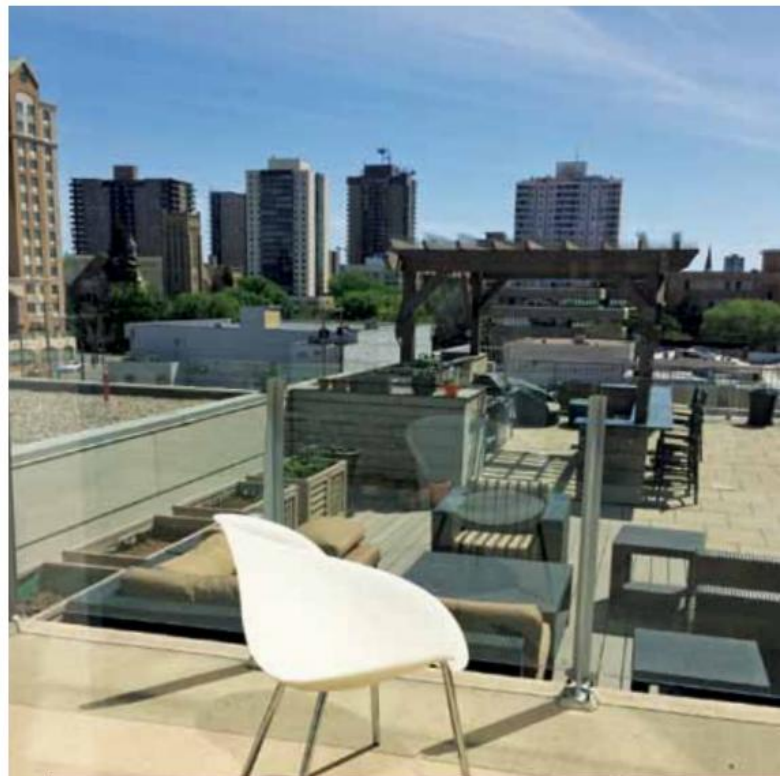
entrance means they’ll meet people who are coming and going, but that’s what they like about it.

“It was eye-opening when I was on maternity leave because I didn’t feel isolated. Not that I was outside socializing all the time, I just had ways of seeing and interacting with people even briefly that made me feel less alone. I’d put my daughter in a stroller and walk to get a coffee and I’d be around people. You’re always a part of something.”

Living in the Downtown Core

Living centrally is also part of the draw for Leisha. She and her husband work downtown (you may recognize her name from hosting CBC’s *Saskatoon Morning* radio show), so they walk or bike to work, leaving the car in the garage for days.

She says the number one question people ask her is, ‘Don’t you want a yard?’ But she says they never feel cooped up. ➤



The convenience of condo living is hard to beat, says Carolyn. “You don’t have to shovel the driveway, you don’t have to sweep the walks, you don’t have to brush off your car.”

Photo Credits: Carolyn Saganski





Photo Credit: Scott Prokop

"Our backyard is the city and we take full advantage of everything."

They do their "Saturday loop," where they grab coffee, then go to the farmers' market for lunch. The Remai Modern and the Canoe and Kayak Club are in walking distance from their home. Kinsmen Park and

the Children's Museum are a bit further away, but they can bike along the Meewasin Trail to get there.

"As our kids grow up, there's even more things to do that we're not doing right now, like going to the board game cafe, the Roxy Theatre, or the downtown theatre. There's no shortage of things

to do around us."

For Carolyn, her condo becomes the gathering place for friends before they go out, and she enjoys being close to restaurants and bars. One of her favourite spots in downtown Saskatoon is the Capitol, less than a two-minute walk from her front door.

"People my age think downtown Saskatoon is not the place to be and I think they're so wrong."

She also enjoys the vibrancy of living downtown and the type of people the lifestyle attracts.

"I love Saskatoon's young people and the way they are focusing on the downtown area," she says. "In the farmers' market, it's a group of retired people and really young people that I see. I would say the hippy era and young people have more in common than they think."

Working Out Conflicts

After almost 30 years of condo living experience, Carolyn says it's the people who make living in a condominium great – but the people can be the worst part of living in a condo, too.

"With condo living," she says, "there has to be respect."

She says she knows of people who have left a condo due to conflicts on the condo board. "The emotions can roll to the point where there's



The Mosaic townhouses, where Leisha and her family live, are 12 individually owned units in the heart of Riversdale.

Photo Credit: Rene Prefontaine & Shift Development



Photo Credit: Rene Prefontaine & Shift Development

no going back.”

The condo board handles the management of the building, from hiring for repairs around the building, to upkeep on the patio, to properly managing the condo fees to cover all the costs. Essentially, if it's outside your unit, it falls under a shared responsibility.

Leisha sits on her condo board.

“You have to decide collectively how you're going to repair a damaged sidewalk,” she says. “If you were a homeowner, you would sort that out and make that decision. It can be good financially, sharing the burden of that cost, but

we don't have a property manager who's going to shovel the snow. It can be a challenge to work through.”

She enjoys the people in their condo community but she recognizes that might change.

“We've thought what if all our current neighbours move? What if we're the only ones here with kids?”

Problems can arise, but that's not going to stop Carolyn from choosing the condo lifestyle. She enjoys the closer sense of community, even if that means having to find ways to work with the occasional bad apple.

Making the Condo Choice

Leisha says people were surprised that the couple chose to stay in their condo after they got married. Then they were surprised that they stayed when they had their first child, and they're surprised now as they welcome their second.

But like Carolyn, Leisha and her family think the benefits of shared spaces and living in the downtown core outweigh the more traditional dream of a white picket fence. (i)

Ashleigh Mattern



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WHEN TO SPLURGE, WHEN TO SAVE

WISE RENO WISDOM FROM MIKE HOLMES

Ahh summer! A time for rebirth and starting fresh and, for a lot of homeowners, that means thinking about home improvement projects and renovations. There are many renovations that can add value to your home. Homeowners should always start with a detailed plan, clear expectations, and a realistic budget. But where and

when should you be spending your hard-earned money?

Home renovation expert Mike Holmes believes in working from the outside in. "There's no sense in spending money on renovating the inside of your home if you have exterior issues, like a leaky roof or cracks in your foundation," says Mike. That new kitchen and bathroom

are tempting, but first the foundation must be solid.

Splurge

On a Home Inspection: Before starting any large renovation, Mike highly recommends getting a good home maintenance inspection by a qualified home inspector. It's important that person is a seasoned

professional with a strong background in construction or engineering, and that they use specialized equipment to provide a thorough home investigation. This includes tools like a moisture meter and an infrared thermographic camera, among others. A home inspection provides a snapshot of the condition of the home at the



KARIN MELBERG SCHWIER



THE HOLMES GROUP

time of the renovation and is a documented reference should any issues arise during the renovation.

On New Roof, Home Protection: If there are roof issues and it's not a repair job, Mike recommends spending money on a good quality roof, preferably a metal roof, if the budget

allows. "A metal roof is strong, long lasting, requires minimal maintenance, and is 100 per cent recyclable," he says. It will also save money in the long run. Metal roofs are highly reflective and retain heat in the winter and keep the cold air in during the summer, which can reduce cooling costs anywhere from 10 to 30 per cent. ➤

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Another question to ask yourself is when installing a roof is whether it is a good time to consider adding solar panels or doing a rough-in for a future project for more cost savings.

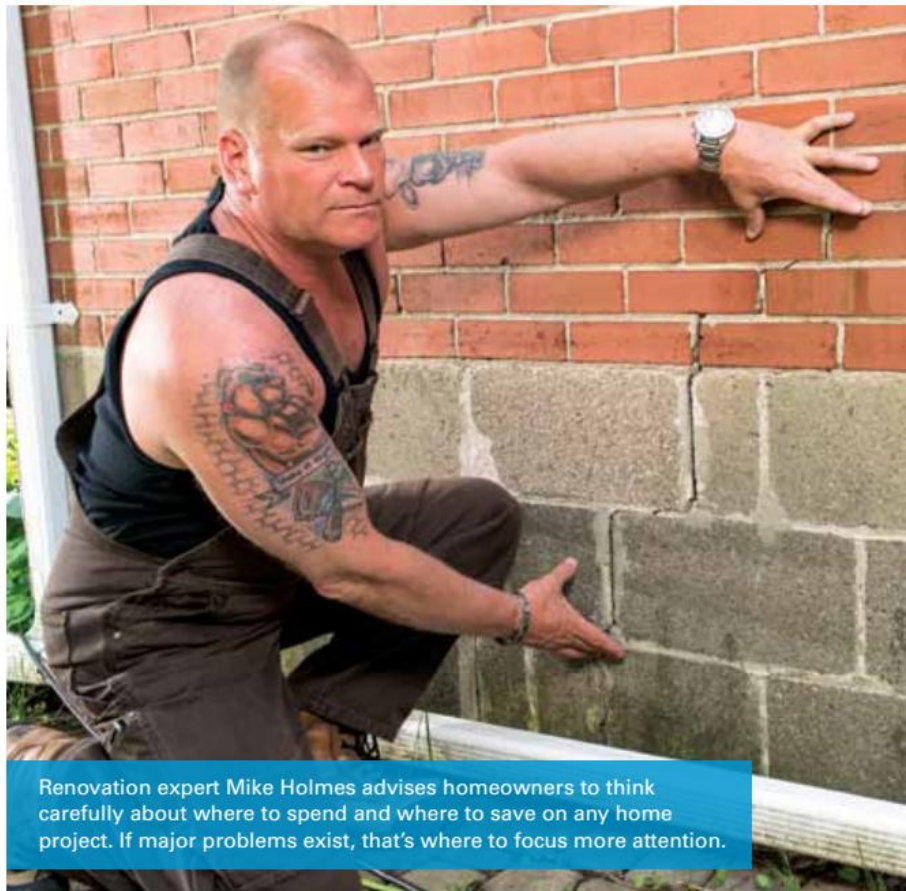
Take the Time to Hire a Pro: Once prepped and ready for a large renovation that involves opening up walls, and modifying plumbing or electrical, Mike advises taking the time needed to interview and find a team of qualified professionals to take on the job. Don't rush to a decision. Larger renovations are big jobs and often require expertise by several licensed trades that will require permits to be pulled.

"Always do your research, learn as much as you can about the project at hand,

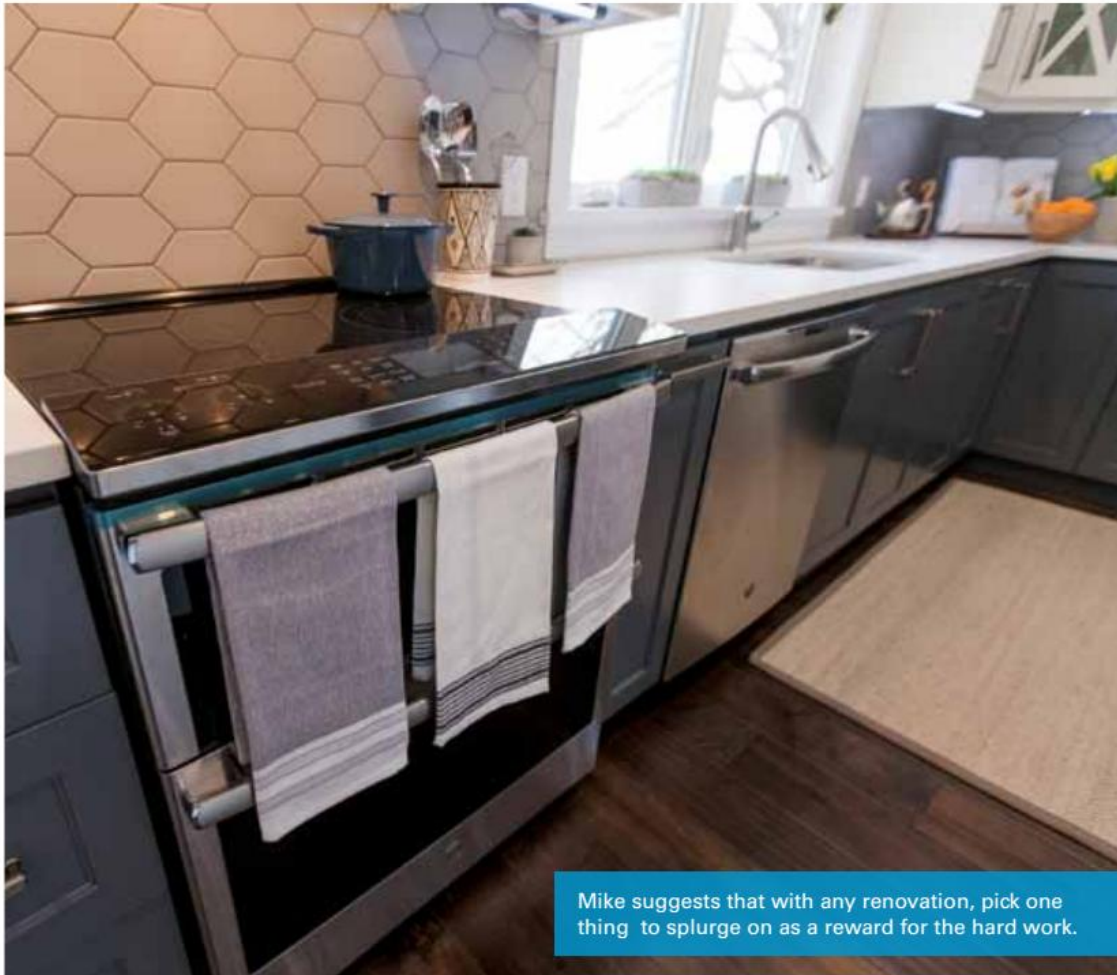
ask questions, ask lots of questions" says Mike. He also recommends getting more than one quote. When you select a contractor you feel comfortable with, make sure a written contract has a detailed payment schedule.

Find renovators who have a proven track record, believe in quality, best building practices, and go above minimum code. Seeing so many horror stories, Mike started the Holmes Approved Homes Builder and Renovator program. This program is made up of quality builders and renovators intended to help homeowners make sure projects are "done right, the first time."

Another suggestion from Mike is to save 20 per cent of the project budget for "emergencies and the unexpected."



Renovation expert Mike Holmes advises homeowners to think carefully about where to spend and where to save on any home project. If major problems exist, that's where to focus more attention.



Mike suggests that with any renovation, pick one thing to splurge on as a reward for the hard work.

trick. Instead of ripping out hardwood floors, resurfacing them may be the way to go. It might be a bit more work but it means fewer materials in the landfill. Tiles, taps and fixtures; there are many varieties and options available to choose from, but no matter how expensive they are they basically provide the same function. So don't go overboard.

Keep things simple and classic. When it comes to tiles, it's more important to make sure they are installed properly. That's where to spend the money – on the labour and installation versus the cost of the tile. If the goal is to brighten up a room, consider adding wainscoting or a new coat of paint. Paint is still one of the most inexpensive ways to change a room. It's possible to purchase good quality products without breaking the bank. Spend money wisely and remember picking the most expensive doesn't necessarily mean it's going to be the best.

Indulge on One Big Item

Whether doing a small or big renovation, Mike believes it's important to have that one big splurge item. Find something to highlight as a special feature, whether it's a beautiful light fixture, better quality countertops or custom kitchen table.

"Find something that will make you happy every time you enter the room," he says. "Because after all your hard work and money spent, you want your renovation to make you smile." (i)

Karin Melberg Schwier



Homeowners may also want to consider getting additional construction insurance.

Save Energy by Upgrading Appliances:

With the rise of energy costs, it's always a good idea to upgrade appliances to more efficient ones, like Energy Star Rated dishwashers, washers and dryers. These consume less energy than traditional models. Also, when installing a new high efficiency furnace, Mike suggests including an HRV (Heat Recovery Ventilator) unit. In some areas, HRVs are part of the building code in new builds but if you own an older home, an HRV is a good investment. An HRV will promote better airflow

and help cut energy costs. "Remember to replace your furnace filters regularly to keep your furnace performing at peak efficiency. Also get your ducts sealed," he adds. "I could see the results immediately," he says about his own recent upgrade. High efficiency furnaces may be a bit more expensive but you will save money in the long run with lower energy bills.

Money On Fixtures, Finishes And Hardware:

The choice of fixtures, finishes and hardware can be a money-saver. Consider things like refinishing versus replacing certain parts of the projects; instead of replacing all the cabinets, see if a fresh coat of paint or just replacing cabinetry doors will do the



HOME Q&A: DON ARMSTRONG

FOUR DECADES OF DEVELOPING SASKATOON



KARIN MELBERG SCHWIER



LILLIAN LANE

*W*hen the Saskatoon and Region Home Builders Association (SRHBA) presented land developer Don Armstrong with the prestigious Housing Excellence Ambassador Award, he was humble. "It's a real honour," he said, quickly tipping his hat to past recipients of the award, and to the "exceptional team" of consulting firms, contractors, homebuilders, City Hall personnel and administration, and co-workers "who've all worked together to make Saskatoon an attractive city with a high quality of life."

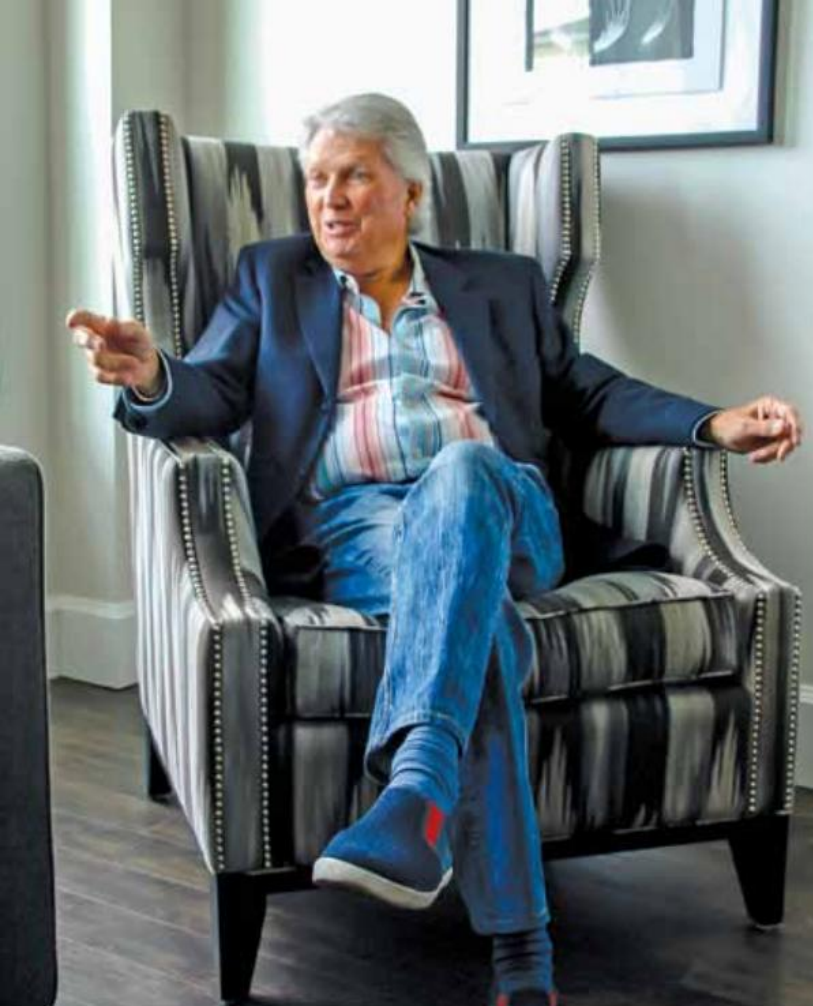
"The Ambassador Award is intended to honour an individual who has left a legacy in the residential construction industry,

and it's hard to think of anyone more deserving than Don," says Chris Guérette, SRHBA CEO. "When you look at what he brought to Saskatoon – 16 neighbourhoods and over 16,000 homes – it's safe to say that our community and industry would not be what they are today without his contributions."

Over a nearly 45-year career, Don spearheaded subdivisions from River Heights in the 1970s to today's Brighton in the Holmwood Suburban Development Area (SDA). Don met with *HOME* to reflect on what he is most proud of over the course of his career, and on the city's growth and evolving priorities.

Q: *You're not from Saskatoon, but you've been here since 1975. How did you come to call this home?*

A: I am originally from Swift Current, and graduated from the Saskatchewan Technical Institute in civil engineering. My first job was in Regina, with an engineering consulting firm representing a number of local land developers. In 1970 I moved to Edmonton working with a developer who was also a partner with Mike Boychuk on a development in Saskatoon. As the managing partner, I'd come here and do some development work in River Heights. In those days, we'd do one or two streets at a time. Mike eventually said why don't you just come to work for me? So in 1975 I did. Eventually with a restructuring of Boychuk Construction, Preston Developments was created. It later became Dundee Developments, and then Dream, an acronym for Dundee Real Estate Asset Management. Today it's Dream Development. ➤



Q: *Different neighbourhoods have different characters. How do you encourage growth so all aren't carbon copies?*

A: To start with, you research the general vicinity and the kind of housing in close proximity. That somewhat tells you what kind of market you tailor the development towards. When we developed the Willows, we saw a unique opportunity to integrate housing with an existing golf course, resulting in Saskatoon's first golf course community. In other areas, you may introduce more diverse housing options for different demographics or if affordability is an issue for younger families. Creating the right mix of amenities is important, and you learn from previous developments.

Q: *Your career spans nearly 45 years. To what do you credit your longevity?*

A: Just as farmers watch the weather and markets, land developers have to be very informed about their market, the conditions, trends, what people want. There's a bit of gamble. In some past years, the gamble wasn't as scary because builders were committing right up front, buying lots in advance. That gives you a comfort in knowing things will move forward at the pace you want. We've initiated and delivered about 3,000 acres, producing approximately 16,000 housing units, and Dream is the largest private land developer in Saskatoon. How you develop becomes the interesting process.

Q: *Saskatchewan is becoming more recognized for its cosmopolitan cities, but still for its pastoral farmland and living skies. Do you ever mourn the loss of rural land to urbanization?*

A: I can't say I think along that line. In a sense, it's simply progress. Communities need to grow to handle the population and to get the amenities people want. If growth is handled properly, it's a positive thing. I really enjoy looking at land, and thinking about the planning possibilities.

Q: *A city grows, evolves and refocuses its priorities. As a land developer, how do you adjust and change to keep pace, or maybe even influence, city growth?*

A: We always focused on innovation, trying to keep up with newest, latest trends and ideas to make communities as livable and enjoyable as we can. When I first started, it was primarily single-family detached housing, with very few multifamily units. Over time, you introduce different housing forms like attached housing, townhouses, and multi-storey apartments to meet more diverse needs.

Q: *The City of Saskatoon assembled its own land bank in 1954 and is one of the largest self-financed municipal land development programs in the country. As is your company, the City is in the business of buying, developing and selling property. How important is it to build relationships to avoid potentially adversarial competition?*

A: The City initially acquired properties through tax defaults back in the 1920s and 30s during hard economic times. Their land bank was substantially increased later with a major land assembly in northeast Saskatoon. So today we have both public and private development. Some people see it as a potentially a skewed playing field, but we were able to work over the years with different administrations and elected officials to coexist in a competitive yet

Don receives the Ambassador Award from SRHBA CEO Chris Guérette.



Don Armstrong arrived in Saskatoon in 1975 and began a land development career that would have a major influence on this city over the next nearly 45 years.



cooperative relationship. The City does their development, we do ours, and sometimes we even do joint projects like Briarwood, Hampton Village and Kensington.

You're not going to agree all the time. But if you approach it with the good will to work together, you don't end up competing in an adversarial manner. We both are able to come out of a potentially difficult situation and end up with a better city overall.

Q: Take us on the chronology of land development you've been involved in since coming to the city in the mid-Seventies.

A: First it was River Heights, then Confederation Park and Wildwood, followed by Fairhaven and Parkridge. Smaller projects in Lawson Heights and Silverwood Heights, then a single street in Montgomery Place, were interspersed. Due to its size, Erindale was first considered a double neighbourhood. Due to the lengthy time to develop, we determined a need to introduce a new vision to maintain interest and introduce market changes. We took the back half and renamed the area Arbor Creek. It generated some excitement with a more linear park system, and it breathed new life into the area. About the same time, I was involved in developing the initial phases of Briarwood, and we also worked on land in Lakeridge.

After Arbor Creek came Stonebridge, the largest project for Dundee at the time and likely the most successful. Then there was The Willows. It took the longest approval time because a golf community was a new idea and the land was in Corman Park, requiring annexation to Saskatoon. There was lots of discussions and it took us five or six years for approvals to eventually start development. The result is Saskatoon's first fully integrated golf course community, a real asset to the city.

Then came Kensington, with both City and private development, and Brighton, the first residential neighbourhood in Holmwood SDA and part of the 3,100 acre land assembly by Dream in this sector. Brighton is about the same size as Stonebridge and features a different mix of housing, a higher percentage of multifamily, a unique interconnected open space system, and we introduced the live-work concept with a commercial and office component.

Q: Saskatoon's population was about 133,750 when you arrived in the mid-70s, and in 2020, it's expected to reach 270,000. What are some of the most significant changes you've seen that have shaped city neighbourhoods?

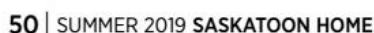
A: Clearly there has been a move from predominately single family neighbourhoods to those likely larger in scale, offering more diversity in housing form and styles, better planned park systems and greater attention to the mix of different land uses. By introducing new and different amenities, more innovative planning approaches and methods, you build on prior success. River Heights is vastly different than Brighton. Today, you see ➤

In future phases you'll see more sustainability through better development practices, more alternative energy forms, environmentally friendly buildings, and a more integrated transportation system. In Brighton, we intentionally reversed the old sequence of houses first, parks later. Now we first establish connected green spaces, walking paths, play structures, and water features so residents can see what the community offers. The Holmwood SDA has a large wetlands area. In the past, earthmovers would have come in to fill, move and eliminate it. Now we look to best preserve natural areas and incorporate them into the urban environment, keeping them as natural as possible, but developing them as part of the storm water management system.

A: We always kept in mind what would make communities livable and enjoyable for residents. We tried to learn from each neighbourhood, and make improvements. Times and tastes, government leadership, priorities and markets all change over time. Each development has a different feel, different amenities, different challenges. But I believe success means you can look back 45 years later and think, yeah, we got that right. (i)

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HOME FOOD: SPUDNUTS

 CRAIG SILLIPHANT

Saskatoon has summer lovin' for spudnuts, the delectable doughnuts served on the midway of the Saskatoon Ex.

Once a year, I bite into the sweet, fluffy treat only to realize that it's gone all too soon, because, you know, happiness is fleeting or whatever. Or at least it was,

until Amy Jo Ehman taught me how to make spudnuts at home.

You'll recognize Amy Jo's name from her writing in the *StarPhoenix*, as well as her books, two of them about Saskatchewan history, two about food. *Prairie Feast: A Writer's Journey Home for Dinner*, is about her

experience eating totally locally for a year. It won a Saskatchewan Book Award and was shortlisted for a Taste Canada Award. *Out of Saskatchewan Kitchens* is about what people ate in the early days of the province, both before and after the settlers came. This all makes Amy Jo the perfect

person to show us the way of the spudnut.

As you probably guessed, spudnut isn't just a cute name. Since 'spud' is slang for potato, a spudnut is a doughnut made with flour and potatoes.

"This might sound like an odd combination," says Amy Jo, "but it makes sense in



old-world farming cultures where everyone grew their own potatoes. It was a way to stretch the flour. But it was no hardship, because the potatoes make a light and fluffy doughnut that stays moist and delicious."

While we love spudnuts in Saskatchewan, they weren't created here. Most likely, pioneers brought them over when they settled in the province. European cooks have been deep-frying potato dough for centuries.

"In Saskatoon, we've had a particular love for spudnuts since the 1950s," explains Amy Jo, "when they were introduced as a midway treat at the Saskatoon Ex by members of the local Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, also known as the Mormon Church. They sold spudnuts as a fundraiser to build their first chapel in Saskatoon."

The spudnut booth is still a popular tradition at the Saskatoon Ex, though it's now operated by Prairieland Park. They make thousands of spudnuts every day of the Exhibition.

"I have super fond memories of going to the Ex with my grandparents when I was a little girl," says Amy Jo, "which always included two culinary treats – a deep fried spudnut and a slice of Doukhobor bread with strawberry jam. It just wasn't the Ex without that."

Years ago, Amy Jo's recollection of childhood Ex memories led her to try making them herself.

"Spudnuts usually start a day or two beforehand with mashed potatoes for dinner," she starts. "Save one quarter cup of the potato cooking water and one cup of mashed potatoes for making spudnuts. I have never ➤"



made mashed potatoes from a box, but if they are made with potato starch, they should work fine in this recipe."

Warm up the potato water and stir in some yeast. The potato water should feel warm to the touch but not too hot. Put the mixture in a mixing bowl and let it sit for ten minutes. The yeast should get frothy (if it doesn't, you need fresh yeast). Then you add all the other ingredients – except one cup of flour.

"If the potatoes are dry, you might not need this extra flour," explains Amy Jo, "but if the potatoes are moist, you might need all or part of this extra cup of flour."

Mix it together and knead it for eight to ten minutes until it's smooth and not sticky.

"I use my Kitchen Aid mixer," Amy Jo says. "If

you're doing it by hand, and haven't made bread before, I recommend you look up a video on kneading dough in order to get the technique."

Add the extra flour a little bit at a time to prevent the dough from sticking to your hands or the bowl. Only use as much of the extra flour as required or the dough will get too stiff and heavy.

Put the dough into a bigger, clean bowl with some vegetable oil in the bottom. Cover the bowl with a tea towel and let it sit until the dough size has doubled. Press down on the dough with your fist to press out all the air. Cover the bowl and leave it to rise until doubled again.

Now it's time to make the doughnuts. Spread some flour on the counter and roll

the dough flat to a thickness of one half inch. Cut out the doughnuts in circles of about three inches, and then make a hole in the middle.

"This doesn't have to be exact," says Amy Jo. "I usually use a beer glass." The inside hole can be made with something like an old film canister or another object of equal size. Using your fingers is also an option.

Set these uncooked doughnuts on a floured countertop and leave them for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a pot on the stove. Pour in enough oil so it is two inches deep, depending on the size of your pot. Heat the oil to 350°F.

Carefully slide a spudnut into the hot oil, cooking until it's golden brown on one side, then flipping it to

brown the other side. As each spudnut is cooked, lift it out of the oil and set it on paper towel. You can cook the doughnut holes too.

When the spudnuts are cool enough to touch, press each one topside down into a bowl of sugar or drizzle them with icing.

Biting into one of Amy Jo's fresh spudnuts causes the angels to sing and my eyes to roll up into my head. I wake up on the floor, after apparently passing out from deliciousness.

"The first time I made spudnuts I ate five of them, one after the other," admits Amy Jo. "They are that addictive." (i)

Craig Silliphant

AMY JO EHMAN'S SPUDNUTS RECIPE

2 1/4 tsp yeast (1 packet)
1/4 cup warm potato cooking water
1 cup mashed potatoes
3/4 cup warm milk
1/4 cup melted butter or vegetable oil
1/4 cup sugar
1 egg, lightly beaten
1/2 tsp salt
3–4 cups flour
Vegetable oil or lard for deep-frying

Dissolve yeast in warm potato water and let sit until frothy, about 10 minutes.

Stir in mashed potatoes, milk, butter or oil, sugar, egg and salt. Add 3 cups flour and knead 8–10 minutes, adding the remaining flour as needed to form a smooth dough that is not sticky.

Place in an oiled bowl, turning the dough to oil all sides, cover with a tea towel and let rise until doubled, about 1 hour. Punch down and rise again until doubled.

Roll dough to a thickness of 1/2 inch. Cut with a doughnut punch or cut in circles and work a hole in the centre with your fingers.

Rest spudnuts 15 minutes.

Heat vegetable oil at a depth of 2 inches to 350°F, when a drop of dough browns nicely but does not burn.

Working in batches, fry spudnuts until golden brown, turning to cook both sides and draining on paper towel. Dip into sugar or glaze with icing.



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Ross Building nearing completion, 1913.

HOMEtown Reflections

 **JEFF O'BRIEN**

LOST TREASURES

Photo Credit: Local History Room – Saskatoon Public Library • LH 772

What goes up must come down. This is just as true of buildings as it is of lawn darts, and while we tend to associate new homes with new neighbourhoods, there's plenty of construction going on in the inner city as well. This usually means something had go first –

possibly moved elsewhere, but more often simply torn down and carted off to the landfill.

Mostly, we don't notice when a house is demolished. We drive by one afternoon and there's an empty lot where we're reasonably certain something once

stood. But unless you lived close by, good luck trying to remember what it was. But there have been other homes in Saskatoon that made a more indelible mark on the urban landscape. Elegant, historic, interesting, lost to the ravages of time and neglect, or to the cold

calculations of developers and speculators, these are buildings whose passing leaves a noticeable gap in our collective memory. Some of them, we might even call 'lost treasures.'

Of course, a house is just a box with people in it, and it is they and their stories that



James Clinkskill House, 1903.

Photo Credit: Local History Room – Saskatoon Public Library - LH 69



Living room of the Clinkskill House, ca. 1911.

Photo Credit: Local History Room – Saskatoon Public Library - LH 2926-17

help make a home historic. In the next couple of issues, we are going to explore a few of Saskatoon's lost treasures – buildings which were not only architecturally significant, but which help reflect the story of the city in which we live since the first permanent inhabitants arrived here in 1883.

Clinkskill House – 152 Spadina Crescent

James Clinkskill (1853-1936) was one of early Saskatoon's premiere movers and shakers, with a finger in every pie and a hand in every game. He'd come to Canada in 1882 intending to homestead. After an arduous overland trek out to Moose Mountain, he decided farming wasn't his cup of tea after all, and fell back to his original trade of shop keeping. He wound up in

Battleford before coming to Saskatoon in 1899 where he built a store in the new part of town, across the river from the old Temperance Colony townsite in Nutana.

His timing was perfect. Located at the juncture of railway, river and settler trails, Saskatoon was ideally suited to take advantage of the wave of European settlement that was just beginning to pour over this part of the west.

In 1903, Clinkskill designed and built the grandest home this side of the river, on three large lots on the corner of Spadina Crescent and Third Avenue South that his wife had picked out and which he bought for \$500. Today, this is part of Saskatoon's River Landing waterfront area. But in the early 1900s it was upscale residential, with good-sized houses ➤

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The Saskatoon Armouries, including James Clinkskill's house and J.W. Caswell's barn, 1960.



The Saskatoon Armouries, 1960.

Photo Credit: City of Saskatoon Archives – StarPhoenix Collection - S-SP-B-4809-001



Photo Credit: City of Saskatoon Archives – StarPhoenix Collection - S-SP-B-2556-002

and the original Knox Presbyterian Church.

The three-storey home boasted a main floor living room, dining room, breakfast room, kitchen, and bedroom. There were five more bedrooms and a bathroom on the second floor, and a study overlooking the river, as well as a wide, two-storey verandah. It cost a whopping \$6,000 and would have cost more except Clinkskill supplied the building material himself,

at wholesale prices.

James and Dora Clinkskill were great entertainers, and their children remembered parties and dances in the house with as many as sixty young people invited, an orchestra hired, and the living room and dining room cleared for dancing.

In 1911, Clinkskill sold the property to the federal government for \$47,500 – a tidy 730% profit – and for the next half century it was part of the Saskatoon Armouries. Ironically, Clinkskill's only

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Ross Building, 1954.

Photo Credit: Local History Room – Saskatoon Public Library - B 9625

son, Tom, was the first man in Saskatoon to enlist at the new armouries when war was declared in 1914, and was killed at the Battle of the Somme in the fall of 1916.

Originally the Clinkskill home was the Officer's Mess. It was later home to the Armouries caretaker and also housed the United Services Institute, an association of former officers, under whose management it was once again known for its social events. In 1960, the new Hugh Cairns VC armouries were built on Idylwyld Drive North. James Clinkskill's "commodious, comfortable home" on the riverbank was sold for \$50 and demolished. Some of the lumber was salvaged by the contractor who used it in a new home he was building for himself. The rest went to the landfill.

Ross Block – 116 Third Ave South

The story of the Ross Block, downtown on Third Avenue at 22nd Street, perfectly illustrates Saskatoon's slide from boom to bust after 1912.

A solid and handsome building, the Ross – named for developer Sydney Ross – was built of reinforced concrete and brick, and was advertised as "absolutely fireproof." The exterior featured a lavish façade of grape vines, coats of arms and griffins. Inside, the entrance was finished in Vermont marble. There were marble staircases, and the corridors were tiled with marble baseboards.

When work started in 1912, it was supposed to be a ten-storey office block. Had it gone that high, it would have been the tallest building in Saskatoon. But in 1913, as the economy faltered, it was hastily capped off at seven stories.



James Clinkskill in his second floor study, ca. 1911.

Photo Credit: Local History Room – Saskatoon Public Library - LH 2926-16



Ross Building, 1986.

Photo Credit: City of Saskatoon Archives – StarPhoenix Collection - S-SP-A14610-016



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The McNab House in 1910.



Photo Credit: Local History Room – Saskatoon Public Library - LH 1165

By then, commercial tenants were getting hard to find, even for a building where rents started at a very modest \$12/month. The Ross joined the rest of Saskatoon's downtown office blocks in petitioning City Council to allow vacant offices to be rented as apartments. The necessary exemptions were granted despite concerns over the grossly inadequate sanitary arrangements of these buildings.

Although there were always some commercial tenants, the Ross Building stayed mostly residential. This meant that a few of its occupants were able to commute by elevator, which must have been handy. For a couple years after the province closed the bars and private liquor stores in 1915,

a government liquor store occupied the entire first floor. This also must have been rather convenient. For years, there was a piano teacher on the sixth floor, which her neighbours may have found somewhat inconvenient.

A majority of the tenants over the years seem to have been single women. A place like that would have been cheap and convenient for young women new to Saskatoon or recently out on their own. One tenant also recalled that during the Second World War, many of the residents were wives of servicemen stationed at the army base in Dundurn.

But by the 1970s, vacancy rates were high. By 1984, only the first two floors were occupied. In 1986, citing its poor condition, the owners filed for demolition



McNab House under construction in 1909.

Photo Credit: City of Saskatoon Archives – StarPhoenix Collection - S-SP-B-3726-001

and after some discussion – and over the protests of heritage advocates here – the application was approved. By November, the old building was gone.

Archie McNab House – 706 Melrose Avenue

If you think Saskatoon is a better place for having a university, one of the people you can thank is Saskatchewan's sixth Lieutenant Governor, Archie McNab.

Coming to Saskatoon in 1902, McNab made his money in the milling business. He got into politics in 1908 as a Liberal, defeating the Conservative candidate – the very popular James Wilson – on the promise that if he wasn't successful in getting the new provincial university for Saskatoon, he'd resign. This may have been what tipped the balance in his favour. In any case, McNab was one of the delegates who went to Regina to make the case for Saskatoon to the University Board of Governors. Late in the

evening on April 7, 1909, after a series of ballots in which, one by one, the smaller centres were eliminated, it was McNab who sent the fateful telegram back to Saskatoon: "Everything OK. Got University. Be home tomorrow."

That year, he built a grand, three-story brick mansion at what is now 706 Melrose Avenue, at 11th Street. It featured a sweeping, two-storey verandah that wrapped around a tower with a cupola on top, with classical Greek columns supporting a circular balcony. Inside it had seven bedrooms, a butler's pantry, sewing rooms, and a huge living room more than 30 feet long. It was big enough that when it was converted into apartments in the 1950s, there was enough room for a dozen tenants.

The McNabs moved to Regina in about 1927 and the house was broken up into large suites. In the early 1930s, it became the Bethany Home for Unwed Mothers, and after the Second World War it was a nursing home



The Salvation Army's Bethany Home operated out of both the McNab House and its next door neighbour in 1940.

Photo Credit: Local History Room – Saskatoon Public Library - A 736



Bethany Home (McNab House), Christmas, 1938.

Photo Credit: Local History Room – Saskatoon Public Library - A 291

for elderly men, before eventually being turned into small apartments.

On May 24, 1969, Archie McNab's elegant home was demolished with only the smallest of paragraphs in the local newspaper to mark its passing. (i)

(In this September's Fall issue, HOME will share a few more of Saskatoon's lost treasures.)

Jeff O'Brien



McNab House demolition.

Photo Credit: City of Saskatoon Archives – StarPhoenix Collection - SP-1969-04-25

DEMOLITION AND REBUILD STATISTICS, 2012-2018

According to figures from the City of Saskatoon, between 2012-2018, 708 single detached homes were demolished in Saskatoon, all but 25 in neighbourhoods dating back at least 60 years. Varsity View, Buena Vista and Haultain led the pack at 84, 71 and 63 respectively, with rebuilds almost breaking even (80, 68, and 57 respectively), which would seem to confirm that the demolitions were to make way for new builds.

Nutana, Saskatoon's most historic neighbourhood, trailed far behind with only 18 demolitions overall. This seems surprising, since you'd think it would be most attractive to someone wanting to marry the convenience of a modern home with the cachet of a mature neighbourhood. But this can be explained by the higher property values there, which mean the profit margins on a new build would be much lower than in the more modestly priced neighbourhoods.



TECHNOLOGY IN REAL ESTATE MOVING BEYOND JUST BUYING AND SELLING

 KRISTA MARTENS

When residential real estate comes to mind, people may imagine the basics of the industry – agents, buyers, open houses, contracts and offers. Buying or selling a home has many moving parts and comes with significant risk, one that professional realtors expertly navigate with ease. Sometimes it is difficult to remember that what seems effortless has taken years to master.

What may be given less thought is how the industry is continuously evolving. The old ways of working in real estate no longer serve the

needs of today's consumer. New thoughts and new tools are shaking up the industry and causing disruptions, all while adding incredible value to the process to meet consumers' increasing expectations.

Let's Talk 'Industry Disruptors'

"Every industry, no matter the size, goes through an evolution at some point. Real estate is no different," says Brandon Moore, Broker and Realtor at Blackdog Republic, a Saskatchewan real estate brokerage with roots in Saskatoon. "Long

gone are the days of realtors using the old catalogue of listings as the sole tool to guide clients to homes. With the advancement of mobile technology – smartphones, cloud-based digital storage, GPS and lockboxes – the power is shifting into the hands of the consumer. That power is information."

With the vast number of resources on the internet, consumers can find data that can help them make decisions faster and with a significant amount of ease. "Marketing plays a role, offers consumers more tools

at their disposal – websites, social media feeds – as well as the MLS system. All of this can save significant time for both agent and buyer," says Brandon. "This allows realtors to be as efficient and as effective as possible. In most cases, we start with clients at a different stage of the buying process. They've often narrowed their list because they can easily access images and information when they want to. Consumers want instantaneous information."

When agents embrace technology, it gives them an



Photo Credits: Brandon Moore



added advantage to stand out in a crowd. In Saskatoon, there are about 600 real estate agents with a small handful of those doing 90 per cent of the transactions. Finding a way to stand out serves both the consumer and the agent.

Historically, the MLS database has been key for realtors to access market values which influence prices. In the not so distant future, this information will be available to anyone, realtor or consumer. "This shift will again place the power of information in the hands of

the consumer. In my opinion, it will empower home buyers and sellers and ultimately make the industry more efficient. We agents need to be able to embrace this change because whenever consumer needs are put first, as opposed to industry stakeholders, industries mature and find new ways to thrive. Database information and analytic systems will be the most dominant force in the industry," says Brandon.

"We are not far off from utilizing data collected from consumer's digital fingerprints in ways ➤

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Brandon Moore says the use of technology has been a real estate game changer for buyers and sellers.



Photo Credit: Brandon Moore

that will benefit both the consumer and industry stakeholders. Look at it this way, marketers are already using social platforms like Facebook and Instagram to profile consumers by collecting highly target demographic and psychographic traits based on an individual's social media consumption patterns. As intrusive as this may seem to some, it's generally faceless big data, and it allows users to receive information regarding the products and services that they value, which is a win-win for both buyers and sellers in the market place. In the same manner, as the real estate industry begins to adopt more advanced methods of data collection, the consumer will benefit by receiving highly targeted information that is tailored to their property searches."

Working Smarter

In a market where competition is the norm, collaboration can be a challenge. For many agents developing their brand of real estate, this shift in thought has been a way to market themselves and find yet another way to stand out

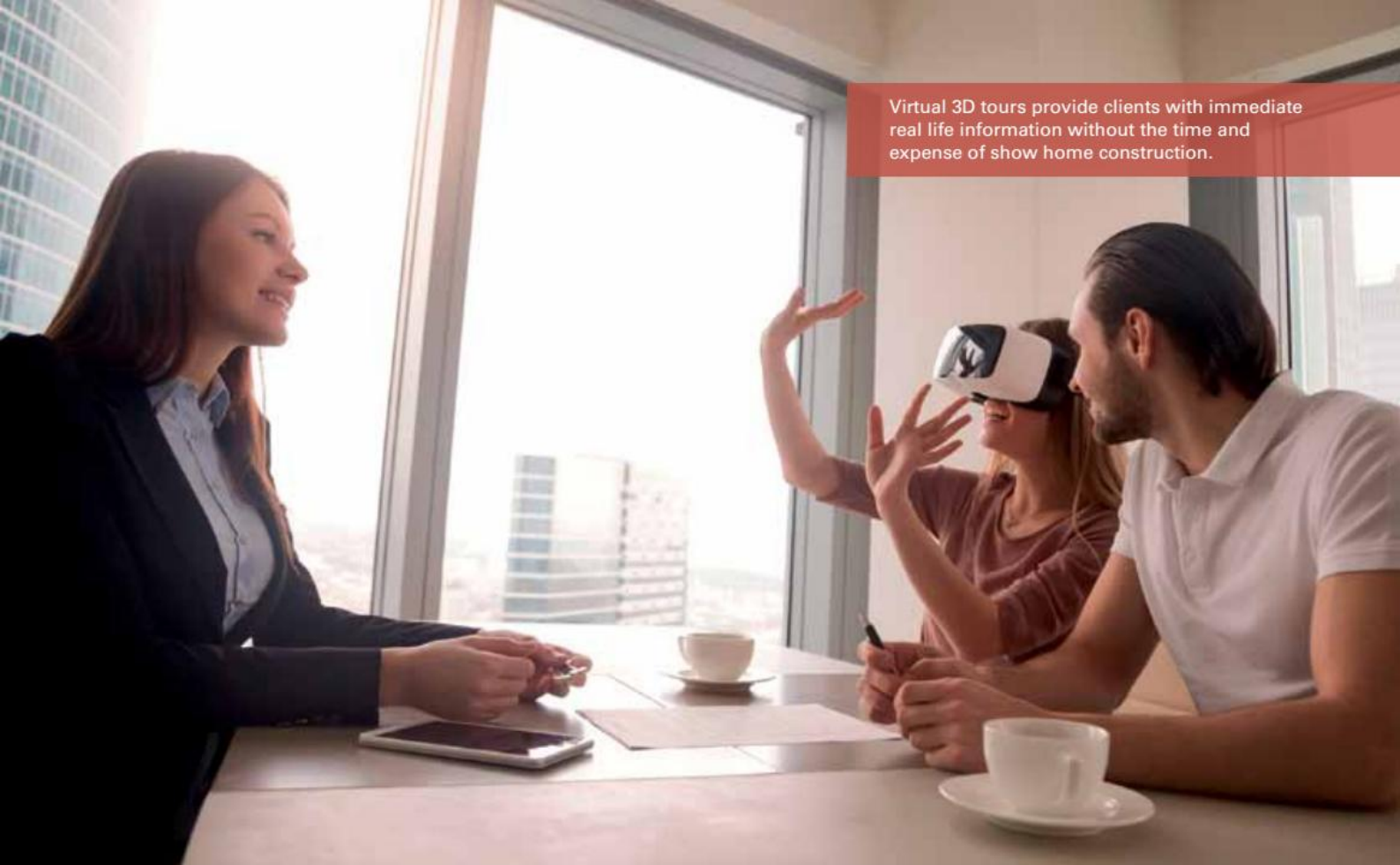
in the crowd. "Peer to peer communications has evolved in the past few years. There are now realtor group pages where information flows between agents. It is a way to work on a sale before a home even hits the MLS system, saving both agent and seller time and money,"

says Brandon.

"With all of these items, it's important that the modern day realtor is open to embracing the change. It's happening at an alarming rate. We need to continue in the direction that serves the customer," says Brandon. "As a realtor, building rapport is



Smartphones streamline so many elements of real estate transactions.



Virtual 3D tours provide clients with immediate real life information without the time and expense of show home construction.

always more effective face to face, but the roles have changed. Face to face is quickly becoming a scarce commodity in this business. You have to be able to do the work differently to be successful in the market."

Let's Talk 'Value-Added Tools'

Photography: Images are still a primary tool used to capture the interest of prospective buyers. "Quality images create a dynamic listing," says Brandon. "Quality photography is an easily consumed medium and should not be overlooked. Images sell homes."

Mobile Lockbox: When was the last time you left the house without your phone? Chances are, it's not very often. Realtors can turn a client's smartphone into a lockbox key. No more going from brokerage to brokerage

to pick up and drop off keys.

GPS (Global Positioning System): Listing accuracy for those hard-to-find listings, especially rural locations, is significantly increased when a GPS location is part of the listing. "Pair GPS with a vehicle's navigation system, and you can go from where you are to where a listing is without exerting a lot of effort," explains Brandon. This step alone can save time for realtors, buyers, and other professionals like home appraisers and inspectors.

Interactive Chatbots: "You may have noticed chatbots on many websites you've visited. This automated software is completely digital and can have preloaded questions specific to your industry," says Brandon. "This is valuable information that creates ways to market products. It can also generate client leads and get

consumers the answers they want even faster."

Drones: The advancement of drones has helped video remain king of content. "Video still trumps written words or images when it comes to engaging the consumer," says Brandon. "The attention span of most people is limited to seeing a video of a listing and capturing those aerial views. Relating property to the greater context of the neighbourhood can be invaluable."

Virtual Reality: In the highly competitive new home market, the use of 3D virtual tours has become a cost-effective way to capture the consumer's attention before a shovel ever hits the ground. "By using a 3D model of builders' stock plans you can build the virtual home versus the cost of building the actual showhome," ➤





Photo Credit: Brandon Moore

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says Brandon. "There is no longer the need to be physically present in a space for the consumer to make an informed decision."

Electronic Signing Technology is an integral part of every real estate transaction and is just one more step that has created efficiencies in the buying and selling process. "Electronic signing software and smartphones have allowed clients to sign contracts from literally anywhere," says Brandon. "No need to be in the same room to close the deal," Brandon insists. "This added flexibility in finalizing a contract has benefited both realtor and consumer by giving everyone greater options for busy lifestyles."

The New Expectation

It's not just the buyer or seller who benefits from these real estate technologies. The agents, too, are gaining an advantage by getting on board. Since technology has advanced and made such inroads in the real estate industry, buyers and sellers now anticipate some or all of these tools to be included in the deal. "The expectation of working with a realtor, whether you're a seller or a buyer, is that you are receiving the highest calibre of service possible. Realtors who embrace technology," says Brandon, "are the ones who are standing out in a very competitive field." (i)

Krista Martens

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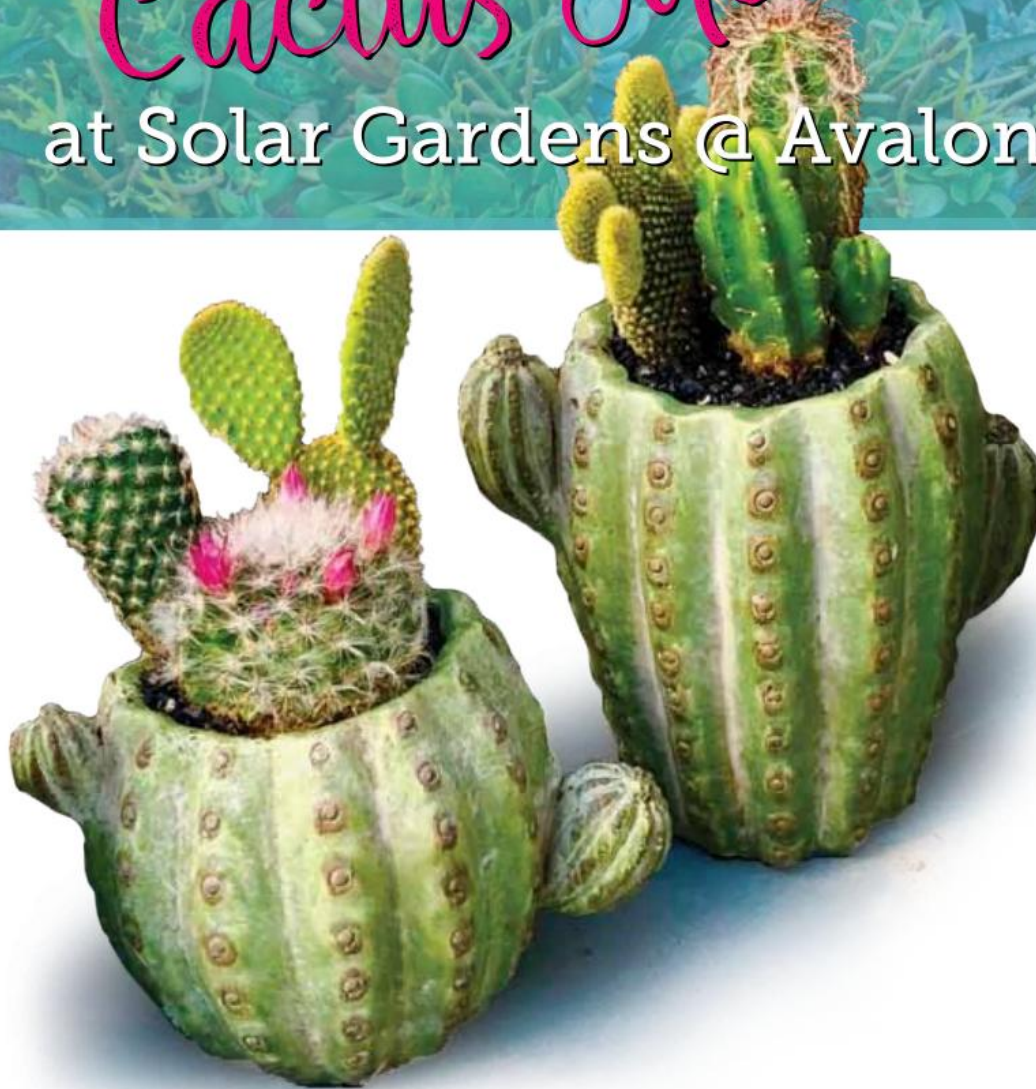
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CACTUS POT CLASSES THIS SUMMER

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Remember, pack tweezers and band-aids 😊

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